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Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion

Letter dated 12 March 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to request you kindly to circulate as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 11, a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus regarding the imposition by the United States of America of additional economic restrictions against enterprises of the "Belneftekhim" concern (see annex).

(*Signed*) Andrei **Dapkiunas**

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Annex to the letter dated 12 March 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

7 March 2008

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus regarding the imposition by the United States of America of additional economic restrictions against enterprises of the "Belneftekhim" concern

Over a considerable period of time, the Republic of Belarus has taken a number of consistent and constructive steps to normalize relations with the European Union and the United States, pursuant to the agreements with our Western partners.

However, one of the participants in the dialogue, the United States of America, ignoring prior agreements, has disrupted the agreed scheme of actions to normalize relations and imposed additional economic restrictions against enterprises of the "Belneftekhim" concern.

Belarus declares that it will reciprocate with tough measures. The United States was notified in advance of the nature of those measures. One of those measures is the recalling of the Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus to the United States, Mr. Mikhail Khvostov, to Minsk for consultations. At the same time, the Government of the Republic of Belarus urges that the Ambassador of the United States in Minsk, Ms. Karen Stewart should leave our country for the same purpose.

Belarus underscores, in particular, that by signing the Helsinki Final Act, the United States, as well as the other Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) member States undertook to "refrain from any act of economic coercion designed to subordinate to their own interest the exercise by another participating State of the rights inherent in its sovereignty". The recent steps taken by the United States administration against Belarus are in direct breach of that undertaking and pose a challenge to all the members of OSCE.

We are forced once again to state that OSCE, which we are firmly convinced should be an effective instrument for the protection of the rights and interests of its member States, has failed to exercise its direct mandate in this situation and to respond to the gross violation of the fundamental principles of the Organization on the part of the American administration.

Belarus demands that OSCE should take immediate action effectively to ensure that this member State respects the fundamental principles of the Organization and fulfils its international commitments.

If this does not happen, we will be forced to give serious thought to the manner in which we should conduct our future relations with this Organization.

The actions of the United States are in gross violation of the 1994 Memorandum, whereby the United States undertook to respect the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Belarus, and, in particular, not to exert any economic

pressure on it, in exchange for the voluntary renunciation by our country of the possession of nuclear weapons. Belarus calls upon the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation, as the guarantors of its accession to the Memorandum, to take immediate action to ensure that the commitments under the Memorandum are met by all its participants. The Republic of Belarus underlines that the United States' violation of the provisions of the Memorandum completely undermines its trustworthiness as a partner. Is it possible to trust the United States after this, especially in such a strategic matter as the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons?

The actions of the United States also arouse rightful indignation since they were carried out notwithstanding United Nations General Assembly resolution 62/183, which states that "no State may use or encourage the use of unilateral economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights". Moreover, General Assembly resolution 62/162, "Human rights and unilateral coercive measures", "*Urges* all States to stop adopting or implementing any unilateral measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States, in particular those of a coercive nature with all their extraterritorial effects".

The Republic of Belarus will continue to be guided in its activities by universally accepted international principles and its own laws.